

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEGUCI 00408 262002Z

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S E C R E T TEGUCIGALPA 0408

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, HO

SUBJECT: CURRENT LATIN AMERICAN PERCEPTION OF THE U.S.

REF: STATE 010605

1. THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS REPRESENT THE COUNTRY TEAM
VIEWS WITH REGARD TO THE SPECIFIC LETTERED QUESTIONS
CONTAINED IN REFTEL:

(A) LOCAL PERCEPTIONS OF U.S. STRENGTHS AND VULNERABILITIES HAVE NOT SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED AS A RESULT OF VIETNAM, WATERGATE, THE ECONOMIC RECESSION AND OTHER RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE U.S. HOWEVER, HONDURANS ARE PROBABLY LESS CERTAIN ABOUT THE FUTURE COURSE OF U.S. POLICY AS A RESULT OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS.

(B) THE OUTCOME IN VIETNAM HAS NOT HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE GOH'S PERCEPTION OF U.S. ABILITY OR WILLINGNESS TO SUBSTAIN ITS INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS.

(C) HOST COUNTRY OFFICIALS ARE AWARE OF THE POSSIBILITY THAT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION COULD LIMIT THE ABILITY OF THE U.S. TO COMPLY WITH ITS COMMITMENTS. HOWEVER, SUCH AWARENESS DOES NOT MATERIALLY AFFECT HONDURAS' READINESS TO COOPERATE WITH AND DEPEND ON THE U.S.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TEGUCI 00408 262002Z

(D) SOME MEMBERS OF THE HOST GOVERNMENT UNDERSTAND THE

U.S. POLITICAL PROCESS, MAINLY BECAUSE OF THEIR EDUCATION AND RESIDENCE IN THE U.S. SUCH OFFICIALS ARE AWARE OF THE ROLE CONGRESS PLAYS IN THE PROCESS AND OF HOW INTEREST GROUPS CAN INFLUENCE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION. IN GENERAL, HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT THE EXECUTIVE IS SINCERE IN ITS EFFORTS TO HAVE FAVORABLE LEGISLATION AFFECTING LATIN AMERICA PASSED IN CONGRESS. (E) HONDURAN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE U.S. ARE CHANGING GRADUALLY. FOR THE MOST PART, THESE CHANGES REFLECT A MORE NATIONALISTIC ATTITUDE BY HONDURAS THAN IN THE PAST, AND ARE PART OF AN INTERNAL EFFORT AIMED AT ACHIEVING GREATER CONTROL OVER ITS OWN DESTINY. UNDOUBTEDLY THIS WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., BUT THIS TREND HAS NOT YET CAUSED ANY SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS.

(F) IT IS APPARENT THAT HONDURAS HAS LITTLE INTEREST IN EVENTS THAT ARE OCCURRING IN ANGOLA, AN UNKNOWN COUNTRY IN A DISTANT PART OF THE WORLD. THE U.S. REACTION TO THE SITUATION HAS DONE LITTLE TO ALTER THIS INDIFFERENCE. HOWEVER, THE HOST GOVERNMENT IS AWARE OF CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA AND INDIFFERENCE COULD CHANGE INTO CONCERN IF THESE OFFICIALS COME TO BELIEVE THAT CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA IS A PRECURSOR TO POSSIBLE FUTURE INTERFERENCE IN LATIN AMERICA.

(G) HONDURAS CONTINUES TO VALUE HIGHLY A STRONG BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. AT THE SAME TIME, HONDURAS HAS TRADITIONALLY PLACED EMPHASIS ON PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL FORA SUCH AS THE U.S. AND THE OAS, PRIMARILY TO GAIN THE ADVANTAGES THAT ARISE FROM SUCH MEMBERSHIP. HONDURAS RECOGNIZES THAT THERE ARE BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM DEALING WITH THE U.S. ON A COLLECTIVE BASIS; HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT VIEWED AS DETRACTING FROM THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S.

(H) IN THE CASE OF HONDURAS, THE GRADUALLY CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF THE U.S. HAVE NOT RESULTED IN ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN ITS GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE VOTING POSITION IN THE U.N. OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

(I) HONDURAS IS NOT TURNING TO ANY OTHER NATION TO REPLACE THE ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL SUPPORT OF THE U.S. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ACCEPTED VENEZUELAN AID IN SEVERAL IMPORTANT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TEGUCI 00408 262002Z

AREAS TO ARGUMENT NEEDED FOREIGN CAPITAL, BUT THIS AID HAS NOT HAD ANY ADVERSE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES FOR THE U.S. NOR HAS IT UNDERCUT U.S. INFLUENCES.

(J) THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT, IN GENERAL, THE U.S. DESIRES TO MEET THE NEED AND CONCERNS OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD. HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT IS UNCERTAIN WHETHER THE U.S. HAS THE ABILITY, GIVEN THE PRESENT WORLD SITUATION AND THE INTERNAL U.S. DOMESTIC PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS,

TO DEAL ADEQUATELY WITH THE RAPIDLY CHANGING SITUATION
IN THE DEVELOPING NATIONS.
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